

## SCHOOL DROPOUT PREVENTION PILOT PROGRAM

# INVENTORY OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMS RELATED TO DROPOUTS IN TAJIKISTAN



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**Inventory of Policies and Programs  
Related to Dropouts  
in Tajikistan**

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## Acronyms

AME	Asia and Middle East Bureau
CFS	Child-Friendly School
COTR	Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (USAID)
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IIP	Investing in People
ILO	International Labor Organization
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RT	Republic of Tajikistan
SDPP	School Dropout Prevention Pilot
SMC	School Management Committees
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
U.S.	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development





## Executive Summary

Each of the four countries involved in the USAID-funded *School Dropout Prevention Pilot (SDPP)* program – Cambodia, India, Tajikistan, and Timor Leste – has set policies for the education of its children, some more extensive than others. Each has local and international non-government organizations (NGOs) assisting in the provision of education services, though the number of such groups varies from a few in Tajikistan to well over 50 in Cambodia. SDPP is tasked with implementation of a project in each country to reduce the dropout rate, and in each case the intervention must fit within the policy context and supplement, but not duplicate, current efforts. This report focuses on the policies and programs related to dropout in Tajikistan.

To create an inventory of policies and programs, SDPP in-country staff completed a matrix to describe about 40 topics that have proved relevant to school dropout rates, describing the content of the relevant documents and programs, their target group, and the ground reality of the implementation of the policy or program and its reported effect on dropout. In general, these topics cover the legal context of education (e.g., requirements for free and compulsory education, services for at-risk children and girls, school calendar and class sizes), the school facilities (e.g., accessibility and female-friendly), teacher recruitment, training, and behavior in the classroom (e.g., special recruitment of minorities or women, use of mother tongue), support services offered at the school in addition to basic education (e.g., bridge courses, health services, or meals), and cultural practices that may lead to dropout (e.g., early marriage). Following a presentation of Tajikistan's policies and programs is a set of options for interventions that SDPP might use within the country, given the established educational context. It should be noted that the viability of these preliminary suggestions will be informed by the findings of the SDPP in-country situational analysis and discussions with the ministries of education and other key stakeholders.

Tajikistan has only a small problem of dropouts in the early grades; rather, their dropout rate increases in secondary school, particularly among girls. So, in proposing options for SDPP interventions, the focus is on possibilities for secondary school:

- Work with the Ministry of Education (MOE) to change policies that may be leading to children dropping out of school, such as the requirements for uniforms, consequences if children do not pass end-of-cycle exams, or lack of transport for those living far from schools.
- Implement a pilot program, likely in rural areas, to allow secondary schools to set alternative school schedules, working around agricultural calendars, and evaluate the effect on attendance and dropout rates.
- Work with the examinations board to change the nature of end-of-cycle and graduation exams from tests of knowledge to tests of comprehension and ability to put the information to use, help organize in-service training for teachers to alter pedagogy to prepare their students for such exams, and propose alternatives for students who fail, including such ideas as make-up tests and review courses that allow a second try.

- Implement a program (e.g., girls' clubs, life skills training, drama clubs) for secondary school girls to encourage them to stay in school.
- Evaluate the current program to mentor first-year teachers and/or the training program to encourage inclusive education, propose and implement ways to strengthen the program(s).
- To encourage girls' staying in school, enhance the work of parent-teacher associations (PTAs) in following up on girls whose attendance drops.

## I. Introduction

In order to make informed decisions about programs that may reduce the dropout rate Tajikistan, it is important to fully understand the policy context of education within the country and the set of programs currently operating. Interventions need to fit within existing policies, rather than contravene them, they must not unwisely duplicate existing programs, and they must have evidence of success in similar contexts. The literature review<sup>1</sup> on dropout programs conducted under the *School Dropout Prevention Pilot* (SDPP) program provided a number of suggestions of potential approaches to address the problem of dropout. This inventory of existing policies and programs, completed under the same contract, serves as the next required step in the path of building successful dropout prevention programs in Tajikistan.

This inventory is divided into three sections. Following this introduction, we initially describe the *existing policies and programs* within Tajikistan, addressing more than 40 topics or areas that may affect student dropout. Then we translate the policies and programs into suggested *options for SDPP interventions* to address the specific policy context and existing. It should be noted that the viability of these preliminary suggestions will be informed by the findings of the SDPP in-country situational analysis and discussions with the Ministries of Education and other key stakeholders.

An initial list of 42 policy topics was presented to in-country SDPP staff to research; edits reduced the number to 41. All topics were chosen because they have been shown to encourage parents to send their children to school (e.g., removing all fees for public schooling, forbidding child labor), support teachers in their provision of a quality education program (e.g., teacher code of conduct, use of mother tongue in the classroom), or help children stay in school (e.g., female-friendly facilities, provision of health care within schools). For the purposes of reporting and analysis, these topics have been grouped into five areas:

- (1) *Legal context of education.* This area specifies the education laws of the country and its rules of implementation, addressing both the ideas of free and compulsory education and the group of actions that, while unintentional, often exclude certain children from access (e.g., the cost of required uniforms or school supplies, entrance or leaving exams, gender policies, lack of services for at-risk children or those with disabilities, a school calendar out of synchrony with the agricultural season). In many cases, the laws state a philosophy or an approach to education, but inquiry into whether the law is fully implemented shows that it is more a goal than a current reality. An important issue to consider is whether the existing philosophy and curriculum provides a range of options in terms of what students are able to study, such as options for alternative or vocational education programs.
- (2) *School facilities.* Topics in this area include the provision of accessible and female-friendly facilities and dormitories or hostels. This is the “hardware” of education, the data on buildings that may or may not attract and hold children’s attention.

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<sup>1</sup> *School Dropout Prevention Pilot Program Review of the Literature*, Creative Associates International, 2011.

- (3) *Teacher recruitment, training, and behavior in the classroom.* This area focuses on the process of delivery of education services within the classroom, beginning with each country's set of qualifications for teaching staff and the training they are offered and continuing with key aspects of their behavior in class: Do they use the children's mother tongue for instruction? Are they "child-friendly" in their teaching practices? How do they contend with misbehavior?
- (4) *School support services.* In addition to classroom teaching, many schools offer support services that can make a difference to a child attending or not. This area comprises such services as bridge courses for overage children, a noontime meal, health care, or life skills classes or clubs.
- (5) *Cultural practices.* This final area shows key cultural practices that may affect a child's continuance in school, such as the age children marry, the response to pregnancy, and any rites of passage that children must go through.

Following the main body of the report is Appendix A, which contains the full explanatory charts of policies and programs in Tajikistan and describes the resource documents, target group(s), comments on implementation, and the reported effects of the policies and programs on dropout rates. In most cases, formal evaluations of the effectiveness of various policies and programs in relation to dropout were not available. Instead, SDPP country staff met with MOE officials, funding or implementing agency representatives, and local education specialists to obtain their informed impressions of the effect on dropout.

## II. Policies and Programs

### A. Legal Context of Education

Table 21 shows elements of the policy context in Tajikistan with regard to the offering of compulsory and free education. The first six rows speak to the issue of the “compulsory” nature of education by describing whether the country sets education as a child’s right, has enacted laws to require schooling, prohibits child labor (which is likely to keep children out of school), holds schools accountable for meeting state-imposed standards, delineates parental responsibilities for a child’s education, and ensures that children attend. Tajikistan accepts a child’s right to education through acceptance of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, and it has made elementary education compulsory from grades 1 to 9. It limits labor for children under 15, although SDPP staff commented that children from poor families often begin working in the bazaar at age nine or ten. Tajikistan makes parents responsible for their children’s attendance in school, and if a child has an unexcused absence, the teacher will discuss this with the parents at a PTA meeting. Though this may encourage retention in school, there is no equivalent of “truant officers” to follow up on such absences.

**Table 1: Tajikistan’s Policies on Compulsory and Free Education**

Policy Topic	Tajikistan
1. Children’s rights	Accepts the Convention on the Rights of the Child
2. Compulsory education	Requires elementary education (grades 1-9)
3. Child labor laws	Prohibits work for children under 14; only “easy” work allowed until 15
4. School accountability	Asks schools to meet all education requirements
5. Parental responsibility	Assigns parental responsibility for children’s education
6. Tracking/ follow-up of absent students	Gives parents responsibility for child attendance
7. School tuition and/or fees	Allows schools to charge a fee
8. Tuition subsidies/ scholarships	Provides scholarships to some secondary students with excellent achievements and behavior
9. Uniform requirements	Requires uniforms for secondary school
10. Provision of school supplies, textbooks, etc.	Asks parents to provide all school supplies. However, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare also provides some incentive/compensation to the children from poor families to cover the budget for textbooks, supplies etc.

Rows 7 to 10 in Table 1 show information regarding the costs of schooling, including the right to or prohibition from charging fees, the offering of scholarships to offset the costs for needy families, the requirement of uniforms and the provision of books and supplies. Tajikistan allows schools to charge fees, which generally cover teaching and learning resources, and it does provide scholarships to some secondary students to offset education costs. All the students must wear uniforms, and parents must pay for school supplies for children at all levels of schooling, making clear that there are these additional costs to keep a child in school.

Tables 2 through 4 continue the review of the legal context for Tajikistan by displaying a list of factors that are known to impede children's *access* to and *retention* in school. Such factors include the country's policies and practices regarding the following:

- *Examinations*, which may be required for children to enter a grade or new school cycle or graduate from grade to grade or cycle to cycle;
- *Promotion*, where schools may have a quota of children required to pass or a policy of automatically promoting children;
- *Age limits* for school cycles, so children may “age out” of a school, even though they have not completed the required work;
- *Gender*, which may encourage girls to enter and continue their education or form barriers for them;
- Services to *at-risk children* and those with disabilities, who may be excluded because of caste, tribe, language or physical/mental problems;
- *School calendar*, which may or may not adapt to the agricultural schedule of families;
- *Class size*, which may be so large that some children are “lost” in the crowd;
- *School distance from habitation*, which may be so long that parents do not feel it is safe or appropriate for children to make the trip;
- Provision of *transportation*, so that those relatively far from the school can easily make the trip; and
- *Transfer* requirements, which can facilitate or inhibit a child whose family moves from place to place.

**Table 2: Tajikistan's Policies on Examinations and Promotion**

Policy Topic	Tajikistan
11. School entrance exams	None
12. Promotion quota	None
13. Automatic promotion	None
14. Age limits for school cycles	None
15. Exams	Requires exams at the end of grades 4-8 and 10 (for cycle transition) and 9 and 11 for graduation

With regard to examinations and promotion requirements, as shown in Table 22, Tajikistan has few restrictions. It has no entrance exams and no age limits for school cycles; children are supposed to be promoted when they have learned the appropriate material, which includes passing examinations at the end of grades 4-8 and 10 (for cycle transition) and graduation exams at the end of grades 9 and 11. However, it is difficult to understand the actual situation on promotion and dropouts as the accuracy of the information provided by districts to the Ministry is questionable.

Table 3 summarizes information on policies for equal access to and retention in school, regardless of gender, at-risk status (e.g., orphans, minorities), family income, or presence of disabilities. Tajikistan has a national strategy with objectives for equal access for girls, children with special needs, orphans, children from poor families and children with limited opportunities, which includes the development of comprehensive programs to ensure girls' equal access, using radio and TV to promote gender equity, and checking the contents of the curriculum and examination system to ensure equal access. However, there seem to be few programs to support the policies.

**Table 3: Tajikistan's Policies and Programs to Support Girls and At-Risk Students**

Policy Topic	Tajikistan
16. Gender-related policies	Promises gender equity through access to all educational programs, all subjects in the curriculum, and teacher gender-sensitivity
17. Support for at-risk students	Requires education of poor, orphans, children with disabilities, and those with limited opportunities

Table 2 summarizes the country's positions on other issues that have been associated in the literature with access and retention. The first is that of school calendar. Since many children may be needed by their families to participate in agriculture, which has seasonal variations in the need for extra help, they may be absent for weeks during a school term. One result of their absence may be falling behind in course work, leading to a need to repeat the grade. The second is class size, as children in large classrooms can be ignored and fall behind, without the teacher even being aware there is a problem. Traveling a far distance to school can be discouraging to children, and parents may view distances as unsafe for their children (especially girls) to cover each day. Finally, in some countries it is only possible to transfer at the beginning of the school year or a term, so that children whose family changes location may have to wait up to a year to re-enter school after the move.

**Table 4: Tajikistan's Policies and Programs on Other Access/Retention Issues**

Policy Topic	Tajikistan
18. School calendar	Prohibits disruption of school for "agricultural events"
19. Class size	Requires 25-30; division of classes over 44
20. Access/ distance to school	No limits
21. Transportation	None
22. School transfer	There is no restriction for the child to join another school at any time of the academic year. Only the students of grade 11 cannot leave their school after winter vacations.

In two of these areas, Tajikistan has policies that encourage students staying in school: a relatively small class size requirement of 25-30; which should keep all children well under the teacher's eye; and a liberal transfer policy in granting students their choice of a secondary school. Its strict school calendar, which prohibits disruption of school for work in the fields,

could work to encourage parents and children to stay in school, but since it is not backed by strong enforcement rules, the requirement may be ignored. And the lack of limitation on the distance a child must travel to school and lack of provision of transportation for students may discourage attendance.

## B. School Facilities

Table 5 discusses two major policies with regard to facilities. In Tajikistan, all schools are required to have separate toilet facilities for boys and girls, and hostels are provided for students at boarding schools, who are largely orphans. Thus, the country provides at least the minimum facilities to encourage attendance.

**Table 5: Tajikistan's Policies and Programs Concerning Facilities**

Policy Topic	Tajikistan
23. Accessible and female-friendly facilities	Requires all schools to have separate toilets for boys and girls
24. Dorms/hostel for students	Provides hostels for students at boarding schools, mainly orphans

## C. Teacher Recruitment, Training, and Behavior in the Classroom

Getting children into school is essential to education, and keeping them in their classroom depends upon governmental policies like those discussed above, the practices of teachers, and the contents of the curriculum. Table 6 summarizes Tajikistan's policies and programs for teacher recruitment and training. As a part of their national strategy, they are planning recruitment of young specialists into the teaching profession. To upgrade teachers' skills, they offer mentoring to new teachers and are providing pre-service and in-service training on inclusive education. These strategies, should they be successful, can improve the profession and offer students a more enticing and comfortable environment.

**Table 6: Tajikistan's Policies and Programs for Teacher Recruitment and Training**

Policy Topic	Tajikistan
25. Teacher recruitment	Has a national strategy to attract young specialists into education through an incentive system
26. Teacher professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires teachers to meet standards for knowledge, skills and performance</li> <li>• Provides new teachers with supervisors or mentors to support them</li> <li>• Has a national strategy to incorporate inclusive education into pre-service and in-service training</li> </ul>



Tajikistan has a significant number of policies to ensure that classrooms are child-friendly (see Table 7). Its teacher code of conduct requires teachers to “respect” children’s rights and maintain “good behavior and a good attitude toward children;” it prohibits the use of corporal punishment, and it calls for schools to be safe, healthy and sanitary environments. It also has a generous policy on language of instruction which permits communities to decide whether their school will use the national language or a local language for instruction. The country is still working on preparing textbooks in the local languages of large geographic areas, so this strategy may take some time to come to fruition.

**Table 7: Tajikistan’s Policies and Programs on Teacher Behavior in the Classroom**

Policy Topic	Tajikistan
27. Teacher code of conduct	Requires teachers to respect children’s rights and maintain “good behavior and a good attitude toward children”
28. Bullying/harassment prevention	Calls for teachers to “respect” students
29. Corporal punishment	Prohibits the use of corporal punishment
30. Child-friendly schools	As part of its national strategy, establishes schools that are safe for the health of children and provide good learning environments (light, heat, drinking water, sanitary-hygienic services)
31. Language of instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows parents and students to choose the language of instruction, either the national language or a local language spoken in a large area</li> <li>Is making a plan to publish textbooks and teaching manuals addressing all languages of instruction, mainly Tajik, Russian, and Uzbek.</li> </ul>

As shown on Table 8, Tajikistan’s National Strategy also includes the development of secondary school curricula to be more responsive to the diversity of characteristics of its people. It does offer vocational education to those who have completed grade 9. With no evaluations of the degree of implementation of the national strategy or the success of vocational courses, it is difficult to see if these offerings are in place, let alone encouraging students to stay in school.

**Table 8: Tajikistan’s Policies and Programs on Curriculum**

Policy Topic	Tajikistan
32. Primary and secondary school curriculum	Has a national strategy to develop secondary education curricula to be more responsive to national, social, cultural and demographic characteristics
33. Vocational education	Authorizes vocational education at secondary schools, vocational schools, educational factories, centers, or other educational institutions for those who have completed grade 9

## D. School Support Services

Table 9 summarizes the additional services offered by schools or community institutions that may be of assistance to students and keep them in school. Tajikistan offers only a few:

- When a child has a health problem, his/her teachers or classmates may work with him/her at home;
- Secondary schools have cafeterias and offer lunch for all the students (primary, basic and secondary) but it is not free. However in a few schools the World Food Program (WFP) provides food for the primary grade students.
- Medical services are provided at each school, and such services may increase in the future;
- Secondary schools are supposed to offer life-skills classes with practical experience in home economics, housekeeping, tailoring, and handicrafts and they do, if they have the facilities;
- Some schools offer extracurricular activities like language clubs; and
- All schools must have a PTA to help with school/home issues.

**Table 9: Tajikistan's Policies and Programs on School Support Services**

Policy Topic	Tajikistan
34. Remedial tutoring/bridge programs	Has many schools that offer assistance at home to students with health problems
35. Provision of meals	Offers meals to students
36. Health care for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides medical services through in-school medical staff</li><li>• Has a strategy to include programs on safe technologies for health in schools, regular energy supply and heating, mobilizing extra-budgetary resources for a more favorable learning environment, and HIV/AIDS prevention</li></ul>
37. Life skills workshops/ classes	Asks secondary schools to provide life skills classes
38. Extracurricular activities	Few schools offer extracurricular activities
39. Community participation	Requires all schools to have a PTA to support teachers and help resolve school/home issues

## E. Cultural Practices

Though not a part of ministry rules for education, some cultural practices may affect a child's access to school and ability to stay in school. Such practices include the traditional age of marriage, traditional rites of passage that may interfere with a school schedule, and expectations if a girl falls pregnant (see Table 10). Tajikistan has set the legal age for marriage at 18 for both females and males, but early marriages do occur in some rural and remote areas. SDPP staff commented that based on the amendment to the family code made by the President on 21 June

2010, if a girl is pregnant she is allowed to get married at age 17. Similarly, there is no law regarding pregnant girls attending school or returning once the child is born, but girls generally do not return to school.

**Table 10: Tajikistan’s Cultural Practices**

Policy Topic	Tajikistan
40. Age of marriage	Sets the legal age for marriage at 18 for both boys and girls
41. Pregnancy	Has no restrictions on pregnant girls attending school or returning after giving birth, but girls generally stay at home
42. Rites of passage	None

### **III. Options for SDPP Interventions**

Alone among these four countries, Tajikistan has only a small problem of dropouts in the early grades; rather, their dropout rate increases in secondary school, particularly among girls. So, in proposing options for the country for SDPP interventions, the focus is on possibilities for secondary schools.

The following six options seem plausible:

**(1) Work with the MOE to change policies that may be leading to children dropping out of school.**

Alterations to current policies might involve restricting the fees that secondary schools may charge, removing the requirement of uniforms for secondary school, reducing the burden on parents for the provision of books and school materials, building an enforcement unit to keep children attending, reviewing what happens if children do not pass end-of-cycle exams (e.g., taking a “make-up” test, offering a summer review course and second exam), or supplying transport to those living far from schools. An SDPP intervention might involve the creation of a National Dropout Task Force of stakeholders which meets regularly to propose options, prepare official documents, advocate for passage, and help oversee implementation.

**(2) Implement a pilot program, likely in rural areas, to allow secondary schools to set alternative school schedules, working around agricultural calendars, and evaluate the effect on attendance and dropout rates.**

Because school schedules are rigidly enforced and some children do miss days, if not weeks, for the autumn harvest, these children may fall behind and drop out. A pilot program in a small number of secondary schools, where the PTA and other stakeholders (e.g., any agricultural cooperative, teachers’ union) agree on an alternate schedule, could test whether such a policy change could make a significant difference.

- (3) Work with the examinations board to change the nature of end-of-cycle and graduation exams from tests of knowledge to tests of comprehension and ability to put the information to use, help organize in-service training for teachers to alter pedagogy to prepare their students for such exams, and propose alternatives for students who fail, including such ideas as make-up tests and review courses that allow a second try.**

Tajikistan has required exams at the end of grades 4-8 and 10 for cycle transition and grades 9 and 11 for graduation. Though it is not clear in the information we have that such exams are “high stakes,” meaning that students who do not pass cannot move to the next cycle and must repeat the grade, this is generally the intent of such exams. A failure leads inexorably to the need to repeat a grade, and the literature is quite clear that repeating and being overage for grade are factors often related to dropping out. SDPP could help change the nature of the exam, the pedagogy teachers must use to prepare students, and the responses to children who fail. All of these may succeed in lowering the dropout rate.

- (4) Implement a program for secondary school girls to encourage them to stay in school.**

Because dropout is a more significant problem for girls in Tajikistan, who are needed to help out in the household and, in rural areas, may be married early, it seems helpful to propose some sort of program to entice them to stay in school. A group of in-country stakeholders may decide the form of such a program, including such ideas as a Girls’ Club to discuss topics of interest, volunteer in the community, or engage in an entrepreneurial activity; a Life Skills Club to introduce them to the home economics skills of cooking, sewing, family budgeting, and balancing work outside the home with that needed inside; or a Drama Club, performing skits to introduce girls’ issues or HIV/AIDS issues to the community. The opportunities are wide open, depending on the interests of the girls and needs within their community context. With the approval of the MOE, SDPP could convene local stakeholders, provide seed money to help start their program, prepare materials (when asked), and advise the groups as they develop.

- (5) Evaluate the current program to mentor first-year teachers and/or the training program to encourage inclusive education, and propose and implement ways to strengthen the program(s).**

Tajikistan is the only country among these four with a mentoring program for beginning teachers, and its description suggested it was something teachers organized for themselves rather than a ministry-driven program. Such programs have proved useful in other countries, and providing a fledgling program with support seems a good way of bolstering the teaching profession (and especially women teachers). By working in primary and secondary schools with such programs, SDPP could describe current best practices, share the practices with the ministry and local school authorities, hold a conference for education professionals on the topic, obtain agreement on ways to strengthen the program across the country, and assist in the implementation of these suggestions.

**(6) To encourage girls' staying in school, enhance the work of PTAs in areas where there is considerable dropout.**

The PTAs in Tajikistan appear to have a very limited role to “support” teachers and schools and help resolve school/home issues. Unlike the idea of SMCs, there does not seem to be a role for these groups in decision-making about the school, and it might be interesting to explore with the MOE such an option. If a pilot group of PTAs, for example, was empowered to design a School Improvement Plan and then put parts of the plan into action, the group may choose to effect change in a number of a school’s problem areas – enforcing attendance, improving facilities, offering more vocational classes, obtaining additional training for teachers in pedagogy or subject knowledge, or starting a “uniform closet” where parents could leave outgrown uniforms and pick up ones in appropriate sizes. SDPP could prepare PTA training materials, engage in the training, and mentor these empowered groups (perhaps with small grants) as they aid the school.



# **Appendix A:**

## **Country Charts of Policies and Programs for Tajikistan**

## Tajikistan Policies and Programs That May Affect Student Dropout

Policy Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
<b>LEGAL CONTEXT OF EDUCATION</b>				
1. Children's rights	The rights of children are specified in the <i>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</i> .	Parents, teachers, children		
2. Compulsory education	<b>The Law "On Education," Article 4:</b> <sup>2</sup> The main principal of State education policy is that basic education is compulsory; and <b>Article 17:</b> It is compulsory to enroll all children aged 7 in grade 1. Education is required from grade one (age 7) to grade 9 (age 15).	Children aged 7 to 15	Many girls do not enroll in grade 10 or in a vocational school; they stay at home to support their mothers.	
	<b>Constitution of RT, Article 41:</b> <sup>3</sup> "Everyone has the right to education. Basic education is compulsory."	Children aged 7 to 15		
	<b>National Strategy, Objective 4.3:</b> <sup>4</sup> Reinforce the articles in the Criminal Code and Civil Code on the responsibility of parents for implementation of the Law of RT "On Education" related to compulsory education.	Children aged 7 to 15		
3. Child labor laws	<b>The Code of Labor,</b> <sup>5</sup> <b>RT, Article 174:</b> Children under 15 are not allowed to work. To prepare youth for work it is permissible to employ school children, vocational students, and special high school children in their free time in easy work that is not harmful to their health and does not interfere with their learning, if they are 14 years old and have the agreement of one of their parents or their guardian	Children under 15	In practice, children from poor families starting from age 9-10 reportedly support their parents by working at the bazaars.	
4. School accountability	<b>Law "On Education," Article 33</b> Schools are accountable for meeting all MOE requirements	Public schools		

<sup>2</sup> Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Education," available (in Russian) at

<http://cis.rudn.ru/document/show.action;jsessionid=632C79C9369F23BCC239EDD822967419?document.id=263>

<sup>3</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan (RT), available at <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/untc/unpan003670.htm>

<sup>4</sup> National Strategy for Education Development RT, available at <http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Tajikistan/Tajikistan%20Education%20Plan%202006-2015.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Labor Code of 15 May, 1997, available at <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WEBTEXT/48035/65091/E97TJK01.htm>



Policy Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
5. Parental Responsibility	Draft government bill, <b>Parents' responsibilities for the upbringing and education of their children</b> : Outlines parental responsibilities to ensure that their children receive an education.	Parents, children		
6. Tracking/ follow-up on absent students	<b>Parents are responsible</b> for their children's attendance.	Teachers	Each class has a register, and attendance is checked daily at every lesson. If a student has an unexcused absence, the teacher will discuss the issue at the PTA meeting.	
7. School tuition and/or fees	<b>Law "On Education," Article 10</b> : According to their organizational rights, structures and ownership, educational institutions can be free of fee or with fee. The amount of fee will be decided with the agreement of government education departments and other related departments, and <b>Article 17</b> : Government secondary schools can be free or can charge tuition with the agreement of parents/guardians and the school/partner.	Students	The fee is used for the procurement of teaching and learning resources and to motivate student learning.	
8. Tuition subsidies/ scholarships	<b>The Regulation of Secondary Schools, RT from 01.08. 2005 # 253</b> "On paying stipends/ scholarships to secondary school students, lycées, gymnasiums, vocational schools and colleges."	Secondary school students	Stipends/scholarships are paid to students to ensure their successful performance and motivation.	
9. Uniform requirements	<b>Decision of the Education Board at MOE RT July 3, 2007 # 14/3</b> : Guidance about student uniforms at secondary schools	Secondary school students	All secondary school students must wear the same uniform. It is often financially difficult for families to buy uniforms.	
10. Provision of school supplies, textbooks, other learning materials	<b>National Strategy, Objective 5.2</b> : Develop regional programs to provide school seats for students with regard to demographic specification of each region, involvement of communities and the private sector.	Primary and secondary students	Asks parents to provide all school supplies. However, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare also provides some incentives/ compensations to the children from poor families to cover the budget for the	

Policy Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
			textbooks, supplies etc.	
11. School entrance exams	There are no entrance exams for government schools. <sup>6</sup> However, there are exams for entrance into vocational schools per the <b>Decision of the Education Board at the MOE RT March 30, 2010 #5/2.</b>	Vocational students	The aim of the entry exams for vocational schools is to evaluate students' knowledge and readiness to study at these schools.	
12. Promotion quota	<b>The Regulation of Secondary Schools, RT, Guideline for Promotion:</b> <sup>7</sup> Students at secondary schools who complete grades 9 to 11 with all excellent marks receive a special Certificate of Honor and Gold Medal. Students who have excellent results for an individual school year and at the end of the year exams also are acknowledged and their parents receive a letter of appreciation.	Secondary schools		
13. Automatic promotion			SDPP staff commented that it is difficult to understand the real situation on promotion and dropouts as the Ministry may not receive accurate information from the districts.	
14. Age limits for school cycles	<b>Law “On Education,” Article 17:</b> Age limits to study are ages 7 to 17. There are three school cycles: primary grades 1 to 4 (ages 7-10); basic secondary grades 5 to 9 (ages 11-15); and higher secondary grades 10-11 (age 16-17). No age limits are specified for each specific school cycle.	Children aged 7 to 17	In practice, children repeat a grade twice but not more. Secondary education for adults is offered in the evenings and as external and correspondence courses.	
15. Exams	<b>Decision of the Education Board at the MOE RT, May 28, 2007:</b> After the end of the academic year in grades 4-8, 10 there will be exams for the transition into the next grade/level; and in grades 9 and 11 there will be graduation exams. Also see the <b>Guidebook for Transition and</b>	Students in grades 4-8 and 10	The aim for the transition exams is to evaluate the knowledge and skills of students and their readiness	

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Education, The Guidebook of Rights and Regulations in Education (in Tajik)

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Education, The Regulation of Secondary Schools of the Republic of Tajikistan (01.08.2005 #253) (in Tajik)

Policy Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
	<b>Graduation Exams in Secondary Schools of the RT.</b>		to study in the next grade. The aim for the graduation exams is to evaluate the knowledge and skills the students obtained from secondary school.	
	<b>National Strategy, Objective 3.4:</b> Identify learning outcomes at all levels for all courses; and establish an independent National Center for Evaluation of the Quality of Education (Testing Center); and <b>Objective 4.2:</b> Develop a program of phased introduction of standard state test for school graduates.	Students in grades 4-8 and 10		
16. Gender-related policies	<b>National Strategy, Objective 4.3:</b> Ensure gender equity in the education system by (a) developing comprehensive programs for access of girls from rural areas to primary, secondary, and higher professional education; (b) preparing jointly with the State TV and Radio Broadcasting Committee programs on gender equity and the importance of getting education; and (c) ensuring that the content of the curricula and the attitude of teachers are gender sensitive; and <b>Objective 4.5:</b> Develop indicators for qualitative and quantitative evaluation of equal access to education...; and develop a system of monitoring access...	Girls	There is coeducation in all educational institutions except vocational schools where girls learn only traditionally female professions	
	Develop a mechanism of implementation in the education sector of <b>the Law of RT “On State guarantees of equal rights of men and women and equal opportunities for their realization” (#89 as of 01.08.2005)</b> <sup>8</sup> .	Girls		
17. Support for at-risk students	<b>Law “On Education,” Article 17:</b> Education of orphans is required either in secondary schools, boarding schools, or orphanages.	At-risk students		

<sup>8</sup> Law of the Republic of Tajikistan “On State guarantees of equal rights for men and women and equal opportunities in the exercise of such rights,” available at [http://www.abanet.org/ceeli/publications/assessments/tajikistan/tajikistan\\_gender\\_equality\\_law\\_11.2005.pdf](http://www.abanet.org/ceeli/publications/assessments/tajikistan/tajikistan_gender_equality_law_11.2005.pdf).

Policy Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
and those with disabilities	<b>National Strategy. Objective 4.1:</b> Improve the State program of social support to children with special needs, ... so that a similar amount of resources is available to educate all ...	At-risk students		
18. School calendar	<b>Law “On Education,” Article 26:</b> In educational institutions, no matter what the structure of their rights and ownership, it is prohibited to disrupt the education staff, students, and aspirants and involve them in agricultural events.	Public schools	Although it is prohibited, in the rural areas students and teachers reportedly are involved in agricultural activities in the autumn, during the harvest.	
19. Class size/student: teacher ratio	<b>Law “On Education,” Article 25:</b> Class size in schools depends on the number of the students enrolled in each grade and the number of the classrooms available. The required class size is 25-30 children, but there are schools that have up to 45 students in a class. If the school has more than 44 students in a class and the school has the space, this class will be divided into two.	Public schools	When class size is very high, attendance is not regular.	
20. Access/distance to school	Only primary schools are in close proximity to children’s houses. In rural areas, all schools may be relatively far from a child’s house.	Public schools	In rural areas, attendance is low, especially for girls.	
21. Transportation		Public schools	No transportation is provided for government schools.	
22. School transfer	<b>The Regulation of Secondary Schools:</b> Students or their parents/guardians can select an educational institution.	Secondary school students	Parents and students can choose the secondary school that they desire.	
<b>SCHOOL FACILITIES</b>				
23. Accessible and female-friendly facilities		Girls	All schools have separate latrines for males and females.	
24. Dorms/hostels for students	<b>National Strategy, Objective 5.3:</b> Estimate the cost for a phased rehabilitation and improvement of the living conditions in students’ dorms.	Orphans	There are hostels for the students at boarding schools, mainly for orphans; all are	

Policy Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
			co-educational.	
<b>TEACHER RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM</b>				
25. Teacher recruitment	<b>National Strategy, Objective 3.2:</b> Develop a system of incentives for attracting young specialists into education; and <b>Objective 4.3:</b> Ensure gender equality in the education system.	Primary and secondary teachers	There are no specific requirements for female or minority teachers to be hired.	
26. Teacher professional development	<b>The Law “On Education,” Article 40:</b> Teachers must have graduated from a vocational school, institute, or university and have the required qualifications, skills and behavior.; and <b>Article 41:</b> Teachers must develop the knowledge and skills of students, masters and others up to the required national standards and improve their knowledge, skills and performance to become professionals.	Primary and secondary teachers	There are Institutes for Professional Development in all regions that are providing training courses on content and pedagogy. Some international NGOs (Soros, UNICEF, Aga Khan Foundation, Counterpart consortium, Red Cross) also support teachers with training on child-centered approaches.	
			It is the tradition in schools to provide newly graduated teachers with supervisors and/or mentors who support them in their teaching.	
	<b>National Strategy, Objective 3.1:</b> Develop a program of inclusive education and include it in the curricula for teacher training; <b>Objective 3.2:</b> Ensure pre-service and in-service training for pedagogical staff, and training of personnel in the education system according to the new requirements; and <b>Objective 4.4:</b> Develop a program on primary professional education by 2015 with regard to specific regional conditions.	Primary and secondary teachers		
27. Teacher	<b>The Law “On Education,” Article 41:</b> Personnel in the education system	Teachers		

Policy Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
code of conduct	must maintain good behavior and a good attitude towards children; respecting children's rights and developing children's respect for national and social structures, traditions, and environment.			
28. Bullying/harassment prevention	<b>Law "On Education," Article 26:</b> In educational institutions, behavior shows respect for students and teachers.	Teachers		
	A new <b>"Code of honor/behavior of teachers"</b> <sup>9</sup> is under discussion at the MOE RT.	Teachers		
29. Corporal punishment	<b>Law "On Education," Article 26:</b> In educational institutions, behavior shows respect for students and teachers. Corporal punishment is not allowed; and <b>Article 40.</b> Teaching staff with a bad reputation or showing bad behavior will not be allowed to teach and will be fired.	Teachers		
30. Child-friendly schools	<b>National Strategy, Objective 5.3:</b> Establish child-friendly schools that are safe for the health of children and provide good learning environments (provision of lighting, heating, drinking water, and sanitary-hygienic services).	Primary and secondary schools		
31. Language of instruction	<b>Law "On Education," Article 7:</b> The State gives its citizens the right to choose the language of instruction and provides students with the opportunity to study the national language and the languages of areas with a large population.	Public schools	The language of instruction at school is chosen by the parents and the students, but students will study the national language no matter which stream they have chosen.	
	<b>National Strategy, Objective 3.1:</b> Create a plan for publishing textbooks and teaching manuals ... addressing all languages of instruction, mainly Tajik, Russian, and Uzbek.	Public schools		
32. Primary and secondary curriculum	<b>National Strategy, Objective 4.1:</b> Design regional programs for the development of general secondary education by 2010 with regard to national, social, cultural, and demographic characteristics, including	Secondary school students		

<sup>9</sup> Ethnic Code of Teachers (22 March, 2011).

Policy Topic	Document(s)	Target Group	Description/Comments	Reported Effect on Dropout
	development of local components in curricula.			
33. Vocational education	<b>Law “On Education,” Article 18:</b> Citizens can receive vocational education at secondary schools, vocational schools, educational factories, centers, or other educational institutions.	Citizens who have completed grade 9	Vocational education is for children who have graduated from grade 9 (age 15).	
<b>SCHOOL SUPPORT SERVICES</b>				
34. Remedial tutoring/bridge programs		Public schools	When the child has a health problem, his/her teachers or classmates work with him/her at home. This happens mainly in the cities and depends on the school culture.	
35. Provision of meals	<b>The Regulation of Secondary Schools, RT:</b> Provision of meals in educational institutions in agreement with the self-government institutions in the community will be required of educational institutions. The educational institutions have to have a dining room, storage areas for food and a kitchen.	Secondary school	For the healthy growth and development of children, it is necessary to serve lunch in schools. However, not all schools do so. In few schools the WFP provides food for the primary grade students.	
36. Health care for students	<b>The Regulation of Secondary Schools, RT:</b> Provide medical services to students through medical staff assigned by medical institutions to schools. Along with the school administration and the pedagogical staff, the medical staff will conduct activities on health protection/prevention of diseases, hygiene and cleanliness, and quality timing for food.	Primary and secondary students		
	<b>National Strategy, Objective 5.3:</b> Develop a program on safe technologies for health in educational institutions; develop a program on regular energy supply and heating in educational facilities; develop a mechanism for mobilizing and using extra-budgetary resources (private and public) for creating a favorable learning environment; and formulate and implement a program on HIV/AIDS prevention.	Primary and secondary students		

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37. Life skills workshops/ classes		Secondary school students	In all secondary schools there are supposed to be classes on life skills where students get practical experience in home economics, housekeeping, tailoring, and handicrafts (if the school has the facilities).	
38. Extra-curricular activities			Few schools offer extracurricular activities e.g. language clubs.	
39. Community participation	All schools have <b>PTAs</b> to encourage parent and community participation in the school.	Public schools	PTAs support teachers and can be helpful in resolving issues between school and home.	
<b>CULTURAL PRACTICES</b>				
40. Age of marriage	<b>Family Code.</b> <sup>10</sup> The legal age of marriage was 17 for both females and males until <b>01.01.2011</b> when it became 18. The only exception is that the court has the right to lower the age at the request of the marrying partners by not more than one year.	Students	Early marriages occur in some rural and remote areas although the legal age is 18.	
41. Pregnancy		Girls	If a girl is pregnant or gives birth to a baby, she does not return to school.	
42. Rites of passage				

<sup>10</sup> Family Code of the Republic of Tajikistan (29 April, 2006).



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